

Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes - Thursday, April 28, 2011

The meeting was held at the Town Hall and called to order by Chairperson Tom Ragonese at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Chairperson Tom Ragonese, Dan Silbo, John Rascius, Charlie Wood, Peter Mozzicato and Kevin Rogers. Also present were Michael Hurley, Town Council Liaison and Kathleen Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation.

Chairperson Ragonese welcomed Mr. Mozzicato to the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board.

A. Public Comments – None.

B. Minutes – March 24, 2011.

Dan Silbo moved to approve the minutes of March 24, 2011. The motion was seconded by Kevin Rogers and approved unanimously.

C. Monthly Report – March, 2011.

The Monthly Report was reviewed by Board members.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Fishing Derby.

Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to update the board members on the Fishing Derby held on April 9th. She reported that the event was very successful. They had over 100 children fishing from Kindergarten - 6th grade. Including family members, there was an estimated crowd of 200 people. The event was co-sponsored with MDC, UNICO and CT Outfitters. UNICO and CT Outfitters also provided volunteers to help with the event. CT Outfitter's owner, Gary Brummett, was instrumental in helping the department plan and hold this event. Dan Silbo attended with his children and they had a fun time. Kevin Rogers stopped by the event and was impressed by all the children fishing. Many native fish were caught, as well as the stocked trout.

2. Summer Brochure.

Ms. Bagley distributed the department's summer brochure. She explained that the brochure was delivered to residents a little later this year than usual. The department was waiting for the School District to determine the last day of school. The last day of school is June 23rd, with high school graduation on June 24th. The pools will open June 25th and most programs will start on June 27th. Chairperson Ragonese asked if any new programs were being offered this summer. Ms. Bagley spoke about the new community playground program to be held at Standish Park, the new Teen Explorers program and the new Science Programs at the Nature Center.

E. Old Business.

1. Cottone Field Lights Project.

Chairperson Ragonese reported that the light bid was awarded by the Town Council to Shock Electric. He noted that this company had installed the lights on the Little League Stadium. Ms. Bagley explained that the majority of the paperwork for this vendor has been processed and the contract is being reviewed by the Town Attorney. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley to follow up with Town Engineer, Mike Turner, on the status of the first contractor completing Phase 1 and the second contractor (Shock Electric) getting started with Phase 2. Chairperson Ragonese reviewed the project timetable. Equipment ordered May 1st, installation in late June and July with completion by August 1st. Mr. Mozzicato asked if this construction work would impact the use of the field. Chairperson Ragonese did not see a conflict because the work for the light poles is off the field. Chairperson Ragonese asked about the status of the looking into the possibility of clearing the area of brush behind the west soccer goal on

the small soccer field at Cottone. The soccer balls gets kicked over the goal and over the fence into the wooded area. The Soccer Club has requested that this area be cleared and a new gate installed in the fence in order to retrieve the soccer balls. Ms. Bagley prepared information on this proposed project and sent it to the Town Manager for his review. The Town Manager will probably review it once the Town budget is finalized.

2. Willard Pool Filters.

Ms. Bagley provided a brief update on the filter project. The existing tanks have been demolished and removed from the filter room. The new filters are on order and expected to be installed in May. The contractor expects the installation to take a couple of days. The project is on schedule to be completed by June 1st.

F. New Business.

1. Webb Tennis Courts Closed Due to Safety Issues.

Chairperson Ragonese requested Ms. Bagley provide the board with an update on the closing of this facility. Ms. Bagley reported that the Webb Tennis Courts have been closed because of the cracks in the surface of the courts. One court has been closed for a few years and the second court was closed this spring because of its condition. Repairing the courts is not possible because of the amount of cracking and the upheaval of the footings for the net posts. These courts will need to be completely rebuilt with new fencing. This project has been identified in the Capital Improvement Plan with a proposed budget of \$100,000.

2. Harbor Management Commission – Review of Responsibilities.

The Board had been working on a recommendation to the Town Manager for the Park Board to be designated the Harbor Management Commission for the Town. This commission would watch over Wethersfield Cove. A list of proposed responsibilities was developed and sent to the Town Manager. The Town Manager had some concerns with these responsibilities. He was concerned individuals would have to petition another land use board for project approvals and the review and approval process would take more time. Mr. Hurley had also spoken with the Town Manager and explained that the Town Manager wanted to reduce the approval process for residents and not lengthen it. Ms. Bagley distributed this list of proposed responsibilities with recommendations to eliminate some of them. The board members reviewed the list and told her to move forward with it. She will discuss these changes with the Harbor Masters and the Town Manager. Charlie Wood suggested putting in all the previous information handed out to the board members at the September meeting that described the commission. Ms. Bagley will assemble all that information and prepare another packet for the Town Manager and the Harbor Masters. Mr. Silbo asked for a copy of the state regulations noted in the responsibilities. Mr. Rascius asked how the different commissions review the operations of the area. Ms. Bagley explained that the Parks and Recreation Department oversees Cove Park, and the Harbor Master has authority over the water. The Park Board makes recommendations to the Town Council for improvements to the park land and fees for the boaters. The Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands Commission oversee land use issues for all the property in town. Mr. Hurley asked the Town Manager to have the Town Attorney review the packet of information for the Harbor Management Commission. Chairperson Ragonese noted that the purpose of the Harbor Management Commission is to develop a Harbor Management Plan. With this plan in place the Town could look to apply for grants to improve Wethersfield Cove and Cove Park.

3. Loretta's Picnic Pavilion.

The acceptance of the donation of a picnic pavilion for Mill Woods Park by the non-profit group, Friend's of Loretta will be on the Town Council agenda for May 2nd. Mr. Orsini, a representative from this group, came before the Park Board at their February 24, 2011 meeting to discuss this project and the board has recommended the acceptance of this donation to the Town Council. A picnic pavilion is identified in the Mill Woods Master Plan and this pavilion will go in that location.

4. Athletic Fields Spring Prep & Cleanup.

Dan Silbo asked the status of the Little League volunteer cleanup. Peter Mozzicato explained that the cleanup was cancelled because of the rain, but they would look to reschedule it if possible. Cleanup consists of picking up leaves, debris against fences and in dugouts and a general cleanup of fields.

Peter Mozzicato commented that the fields looked good considering the winter. He mentioned the three baseball fields were in good condition, as well as the Little League and Softball Fields. The lighted Little League field is in good condition and play started on Wednesday, April 27th. Mr. Mozzicato told the Board that the Little League organization continues to limit the use of the lighted field. They do not allow practice and have scheduled no games on Monday and Friday nights. They do play two games per night. They want the field to remain in good condition.

Chairperson Ragonese asked about the press box. Mr. Mozzicato reported that it was good and everything was ready to go. Chairperson Ragonese asked Ms. Bagley for an update on the maintenance work at the lighted Little League field. She reported that in the summer of 2010 a private contractor treated the field with a fungicide because the turf had a fungus. In the fall, the private contractor worked on the field to increase the drainage of water from the surface down to the lower level. The contractor vertically sliced the field with a special machine, filled these cuts with sand and then aerated and top dressed the field with a coarse sand to facilitate drainage to the lower level. In the spring of 2011, the town maintenance staff fertilized the infield with ammonia sulfate to help prevent the fungus. They will do the outfield as soon as the field is dry enough to allow the machine on it. Town staff also installed a sand drain to remove the standing water from the warning track. In the summer of 2011, the private contractor will return to treat the field with fungicide.

Ms. Bagley reported that the Highcrest Soccer fields are in the process of being overseeded. She did explain that the field closest to the playscape gets a lot of use from the school, so it is difficult to keep the grass growing on the field. They will be giving it additional attention this spring.

Mr. Rascius asked if the High School Softball Field was usually wet along the third base foul territory below the tennis courts. Mr. Rascius noted that the playing field is in good condition, but the foul area is wet. Ms. Bagley explained that the water does drain to that area and it is usually wet in the spring. Drains are installed, but they cannot handle all the water.

G. Motion to Adjourn.

A motion was made by Charlie Wood and seconded by Dan Silbo to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks & Recreation Department